



State of Connecticut

African-American Affairs Commission

**State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue – Room 509
Hartford, CT 06106
860-240-8555**

Good Afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Tong, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas, Honorable members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Subira Gordon and I am the legislative Analyst for the African American Affairs Commission. The mission of the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) is to improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American community in the State of Connecticut.

I write in support of HB 7039 AN ACT CONCERNING CIVIL IMMIGRATION DETAINERS, the TRUST Act amendments, which will update the TRUST Act adopted in 2013, reforming state and local responses to civil immigration detainers ("ICE detainer requests") and providing crucial protection to Connecticut residents. This bill will advance public safety by rebuilding the trust between immigrant communities and local police that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has undermined through "Secure" Communities (S-Comm) and its successor, Priority Enforcement Program (PEP-Comm).

These DHS programs have led to the removal of many Connecticut residents without criminal convictions. ICE detainers have created an incentive for police officers, judicial marshals, and probation officers to target people of color, converting police departments and courthouses into what many believe are virtual immigration checkpoints. Additionally, by holding certain individuals on ICE detainers, state and local law enforcement have taken on the substantial burden of carrying out federal immigration law. ICE detainer requests are not legally binding, and local law enforcement agencies are under no obligation to respond to

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these requests. This is precisely why more than 300 states and local municipalities across the country have already passed legislation to limit the reach of these detainers into their communities.

The harmful cooperation between ICE and local law enforcement in Connecticut is destroying communities. Despite the TRUST Act of 2013, immigrants and their families and friends are still reluctant to contact the police or approach courthouses because they are worried about their immigration status being communicated to ICE, and fear being held under an ICE detainer. DHS programs have undermined public safety, and immigrants have been unable to report landlord abuse, workplace abuse, and other crimes in our communities.

The proposed TRUST Act amendments close major loopholes in the current legislation ensuring that all CT law enforcement officers do not detain any individual based on any ICE detainer requests. It also prohibits CT law enforcement officers from sending information to ICE about custody status or release of individuals in CT custody, and keeping immigration status confidential. The amendments in this bill would uphold a federally approved division between local law enforcement and federal immigration authorities. They would protect Connecticut taxpayers by ensuring that the state does not expend local resources on ICE detainer requests. Most importantly, the bill would foster community prosperity, safety, and unity.

Connecticut has long been a pioneer in immigration reform and protection, and it is time for Connecticut to continue to be a pioneer by amending the TRUST Act of 2013.

Thank you for your time.